DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 342 133 EA 023 765

AUTHOR Kahne, Joseph; And Others
TITLE Restructuring: Where Are We and Where Are We Going?
INSTITUTION Far West Lab. for Educational Research and Development, San Francisco, Calif.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Sep 91
CONTRACT RP91002006
NOTE 35p.; Cover title is: "Restructuring: Where We Are and Where Are We Going."
AVAILABLE FROM Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 730 Harrison Street, San Francisco, CA 94107-1242.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Decentralization; *Educational Change; Elementary Secondary Education; *Excellence in Education; *Organizational Development; *Participative Decision Making; Public Schools; School Community Relationship; *School Restructuring

ABSTRACT

Two distinct "waves" characterized the efforts to change public schools in the 1980s. The first wave called for increased academic standards (increased graduation requirements, longer school days, and strict accountability standards), but neglected educational practice and the roles that parents, teachers, administrators, and community members played in education. The second wave of reform attempted to compensate for this by focusing on the school as a whole as the important unit of change. This document examines this restructuring movement against the historical background from which it has emerged. It also describes examples of federal, state, school, and district restructuring and suggests that these proposed changes will require teachers, site-based administrators, and individuals in district and state offices to assume significantly different roles and responsibilities. This evolution of the restructuring movement suggests new concerns. Political, fiscal, and organizational barriers may cause problems for future restructuring. Decisions regarding the extent and nature of restructuring should be made considering the goals of particular schools and districts, their available resources, and their organizational and political context. (40 references) (LAP)

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Restructuring:

Where Are We and

Where Are We Going

Joseph Kahne, Paul Goren,

and Mary Amsler

September 1991

Joseph Kahne, a former high school teacher, holds a Master's degree from Stanford University and is currently finishing his Ph.D. in Educational Policy and Administration at Stanford University.

Paul Goren just received his Ph.D. at Stanford University's School of Education and is now Senior Policy Analystt at the Center for Research for the National Governor's Association.

Dr. Mary Amsler is the director of the Policy Support Services Program at Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development in San Francisco.

This document is supported by federal funds from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, contract number RP91002006. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the United States Government.

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Introduction

The word restructuring is frequently heard in elementary and secondary faculty meetings, at school district headquarters, on the floors of state legislatures, and in federal offices in Washington, D.C. In the current rhetoric of school reform, most if not all efforts to improve public schools employ the term restructuring. Yet the meaning of this term changes with the setting in which it is used and with the people who use it. This White Paper is designed to clarify these multiple meanings by presenting both an overview of current thinking about restructuring and a critical analysis of the barriers to the changes that restructuring entails.

The first section of the White Paper reviews the current context of the movement to restructure schools, a movement that evolved out of the two "waves" of reform that occurred during the 1980s. The second section of the paper portrays this movement against the background of the broader historical context from which it has emerged. This is followed by descriptions of different types of restructuring efforts, including examples drawn from school, district, state, and federal levels. These descriptive analyses form the basis for a critical discussion of the organizational and structural impediments to school restructuring. The paper concludes by looking ahead to "cutting-edge" concerns that are developing as the restructuring movement continues to evolve.

Current Context for Restructuring

Two distinct "waves" characterized the efforts to change public schools in the 1980s. The first wave surfaced in response to concerns with the national economy: many began to question whether schools were providing young Americans with skills that would support the nation's status and position in a competitive world market. The argument that the United States lagged behind other industrialized countries due to its failing educational system was articulated by Michael Cohen in a report for the National Governors' Association. Cohen stressed that the nation needs: (1) a well-educated and trained workforce; (2) equitable educational opportunities for all students to sustain "the stability of our democracy" and national economy; and (3) cost-effective educational systems, especially since states invest an average of 37 percent of their budgets in education (Cohen, 1988). As a result of arguments of this kind, reformers called for increased academic standards across the fifty states.

By invoking excellence through higher standards, however, the first wave of reform neglected educational practice and the roles that teachers, administrators, parents, and community members play in the education of young people. The second wave of reform, accordingly, focused on the school as a whole as the important unit of change. Concern for the empowerment of school practitioners and parents, and an interest in alternative modes of student assessment, were representative of the kinds of change now under discussion. It was this more radical approach to school reform that has come to be widely referred to as restructuring.

The first wave of educational reform overlooked the limited ability of policies designed in state capitals to change classroom practice.

The first wave of educational reform was initiated in April, 1983, with the publication of *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. According to this report by the National Commission for Excellence in Education (1983), "The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people." In the wake of this report, states across the country issued mandates designed to improve the schools and the conditions of education. These mandates included increased graduation requirements, longer school days, and strict accountability standards. What resulted were school systems governed more closely by the states, with uniform standards and performance measures for local schools to meet (Tyack, 1990).

What mandates of this kind overlooked was the limited ability of policies designed in state capitals, universities, and think-tank settings to change classroom practice. Thomas Timar noted this dilemma:

> A further impediment to centralized school reform is the fact that state-level policy makers have a limited repertoire of policy options from which to draw. They can manage macro-policy —funding, teacher certification, textbook adoption, curriculum standards and equity and the like —but have limited control over daily school operations. State policy cannot change what it cannot control (Timar, 1990).

The emphasis on standards and achievement goals did serve the political purpose of focusing national attention and debate on public schools and the criteria by which their success would be measured. But these reforms did not address the activities and dynamics of the school itself —interactions between and among students, school practitioners, parents and community members —nor on the conditions necessary actually to improve teaching and learning.

The second wave of educational reform was designed to redress this deficiency. Books such as *Horace's Compromise* (Sizer, 1984), *The Good High School* (Lightfoot, 1983), *The Shopping Mall High School* (Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985), and *A Place Called School* (Goodlad, 1984) highlighted problems with current systems and suggested school-based changes involving those most expert in educational practice — teachers and school-site administrators. School practitioners, parents, and community members emerge as key players in these efforts (for discussions of the school as the focal point of change, see Goodlad, 1975, and Levin, 1988).

Restructuring efforts also emphasized the need to attract better trained individuals into the teaching force. The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986) made this argument in their report *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*:

> There is a new consensus on the urgency of making our schools once again the engines of progress, productivity, and prosperity. . . . Without a (teaching) profession possessed of high skills, capabilities, and aspirations, any reforms will be short-lived. To build such a profession — to restore the nation's cutting edge — the Task force calls for sweeping changes in educational policy to . . . restructure schools to provide a professional environment for teaching, freeing them to decide how best to meet state and local goals for children while holding them accountable for student progress.

The movement to restructure schools and school systems aims to improve the academic performance of all students through several different approaches.

The movement to restructure schools and school systems aims to improve the academic performance of all students through several different approaches. Change occurs not only through attracting and keeping top quality teachers, but also through the empowerment of parents and school practitioners, so that they may become involved in decision making vital to improving school environments. Restructuring may also entail changes in the ways schools are governed, in instructional methods and curricular organization, and in the assessment of student progress. Some scholars are also calling for "systemic change" (see Smith & O'Day, 1990), coordinating reform efforts of the schools, the states, and the Federal government. The overall intent of these efforts was reflected in a speech by Thomas W. Payzant, Superintendent of San Diego City Schools, entitled "Why Restructuring? More of the Same Will Not be Good Enough:"

> We understand that the change which leads to restructuring of schools is complex and quite different from most change educators have discussed before. It involves fundamental questioning of traditional assumptions about the best way to organize schools for teaching and learning. It leads us to raise questions about roles and responsibilities and find new answers to them. It requires us to acknowledge that education for our students can be a lot better, and our satisfaction with helping students learn can be much higher. It demands that we demonstrate both patience and persistence. (Payzant, 1988).

The Historical Context for Restructuring

To understand school restructuring more clearly it is important to place it within the context of school reform over the past 100 years. Many scholars and practitioners are cynical when it comes to reform efforts since it seems that similar reforms keep reappearing(see Cuban 1990). History has taught us not to be overly optimistic about the longevity of educational reform. Two changes in education over the past 100 years that are central to the current restructuring efforts —decentralization and curricular reform—illustrate this fact.

Similar reforms keep reappearing. History has taught us not to be overly optimistic about the longevity of educational reform.

Education in the United States has gone through several different cycles of centralization and decentralization. These swings were more a result of social forces than the promotion of systematic change for schools and school systems. Towards the end of the 1800s educational systems were becoming highly centralized. School reformers during the Progressive Era consolidated the more than 100,000 school districts that existed in the mid-1800s into fewer yet larger districts operated by small school boards and professional educators (Tyack 1974, Cremin 1961). The new school systems reflected the hierarchical organizational structures of business, stressing efficiency in the schools and following industry's tenets of scientific management (Callahan 1962, Tyack 1974). This "one best system" of centralized school administration also evolved as the country became more urbanized, with increasing numbers of immigrants settling in cities and with the economy shifting from an agricultural to an industrial base.

The centralized organization of districts espoused during the Progressive Era was called into question in the 1960s by Civil Rights advocates and those pushing for more equitable distribution of government services. What resulted in the early 1960s was a movement to decentralize urban school systems, so that they would become more responsive to their communities, while simultaneously pushing equity as a national standard for schools. While the state and Federal legislatures, as well as the courts, became more involved in schooling processes to promote and ensure equal access, districts like New York were decentralizing into 32 community school districts governed by parents and community members. At this point government became more involved on a national basis in a system that was trying to respond to problems and issues arising at the local level (see, for example, Kaestel and Smith 1982, "The Federal Role in Elementary and Secondary Education" *Harvard Education Review*, 52(4), 1982).

The reform efforts of the early 1980s countered this movement to decentralize by shifting school governance back to a more centralized

system with specific state mandated requirements and regulations. Increased graduation requirements, longer school days and years, and other policy mandates were required of schools. At the same time, these reforms also gave way to the current movement towards school-site management and school-based decision-making to give educators more control and autonomy over what they do (Cuban 1990).

Curricular change provides a second illustration of the cyclical nature of educational reform over the past 100 years. Reformers during the Progressive Era proposed changes to existing school curricula and instruction. Instructional methods in the early 1800s were primarily teacher-centered techniques in which students received their education from teachers through textbooks. Student-centered techniques evolved during the Progressive Era. These techniques focused on student involvement and discovery, small group instruction, and more active participation of students and teachers in the learning process. Advocates for reform during the Progressive Era and beyond challenged the common core curriculum from the mid-1800s, arguing for new curricula to fit student needs with a variety of different offerings that included both academic subjects and vocational education (Cremin, 1961; Tyack, 1974).

Reform of the curriculum took several interesting swings during the late 1950s and 1960s. During the late 1950s there was a shift back to a more formal academic curriculum reflecting the belief that American students were not trained well enough to address the country's needs. In this regard, increased standards for mathematics and science emerged as a direct response to the perceived threat posed by the Sputnik project's success and the Cold War with the Soviet Union. These efforts to push the "basics" placed educational reform in the national spotlight, linking what goes on in the classroom to the security and well being of the country (Tyack, 1974).

The pendulum swung in the late 1960s to curricula that were more open and student centered, reflecting social movements of the time. Alternative public schools like Metro High School in Chicago and the Parkway Program in Philadelphia offered students the chance to participate in schools where the city was their classroom. Open classrooms, non-graded schools, flexible requirements, elective programs of study, and alternative curricula emerged during this period, giving students more control over their education and what they wished to study (Deal and Nolan, 1978). Curricular reform in the 1980s changed back again to a "basics" emphasis, away from the "Shopping Mall High School" of disconnected course choices (see

Powell, Farrar, and Cohen 1985) and towards standard curricula stressing the traditional subjects (Cuban 1990, Tyack 1990).

This cyclical pattern leads scholars and practitioners to worry that most educational reforms come and go leaving those at school sites subject to projects and initiatives that constantly change. For more than 100 years politicians, educators, and the public have called for reform in the public schools, focusing on issues such as school governance and organization, classroom instruction, and accountability measures (see Tyack 1990). These changes typically occur during periods characterized by political, social, or economic challenges in the society at large. Although reform efforts have responded to these challenges and indeed have some effect on schools, change has been incremental and slow.

Second-order changes, which seek to alter the fundamental ways in which organizations are put together are less common. The roles, responsibilities, and daily practices of both teachers and students have remained relatively constant over the years.

The limited and elusive nature of these reform efforts is captured by Larry Cuban when he writes that " . . . the dominant rhythm of the high school day has remained undisturbed for most of this century. (Cuban, 1982) Despite numerous calls for reform, teachers and students behave in ways that are remarkably consistent with the behavior of their counterparts at the turn of the century. There have been changes in the curricular content, assessment measures, and school financing formulas — these Cuban labels first-order changes. Such changes are attempts to promote efficiency and/or effectiveness without changing the dominant structural features of the educational system and they are relatively common. Second-order changes, which seek to alter the fundamental ways in which organizations are put together are less common. The roles, responsibilities, and daily practices of both teachers and students have remained relatively constant over the years.

Change in schools is also difficult because of competing agendas. Elmore and McLaughlin (1988) in their essay *Steady Work* argue that the worlds of educational policy, practice, and administration are interdependent but separate. This occurs because the demands of policymakers and practitioners are necessarily different, as are their timelines. School practitioners who are responsible for the implementation of educational policy in schools and classrooms seldom have the opportunity to inform policymakers and policy analysts about their viewpoints on proposed initiatives. This perspective, coupled with the fact that educational reform efforts reflect changing social and political movements and seldom have the desired "second-order" effects, creates reason for caution among those policymakers considering the lasting effects of the current restructuring efforts.

Yet there is great importance in harnessing the energy that emerges from individuals interested in and committed to restructuring the public schools. Perhaps David Tyack states it best:

> "No magic wand of restructuring can set things permanently straight. We will always have waves of education reform that seek to alter the substantial structures we have built, for values differ, interests conflict, generational perspectives change. For the last century Americans have been constantly tinkering toward utopia in school reform. It has been our way of creating the future that we want." (Tyack, 1990, pp.189).

Types of Restructuring

As this White Paper indicates, dozens of reports at the national, state, and local level have proclaimed the need to restructure our nation's schools. Analysts of otherwise diverse persuasions have agreed on the importance of this goal.

What accounts for this broad consensus? Clearly part of the explanation lies in widespread discontent with current schooling structures, practices, and outcomes among leaders in education, government, and business. This unity, however, may also be misleading. Analysts do not all share the same reform agenda. They are able to agree on the need to "restructure" schools because they lack consensus regarding the meaning of the term. Restructuring has come to stand for efforts carried on at a variety of levels, justified by a diverse array of educational and organizational theories, and with a number of different goals in mind. As Richard Elmore has written, "School restructuring has many of the characteristics of what political and organizational theorists call 'a garbage can' ... the theme of restructuring schools can accommodate a variety of conceptions of what is problematic about American education, as well as a variety of solutions." (*Restructuring Schools: The Next Generation of Educational Reform*, 1990)

Restructuring has come to stand for efforts carried on at a variety of levels, justified by a diverse array of educational and organizational theories, and with a number of different goals in mind.

Policymakers interested in restructuring need to be aware of the many activities associated with this term. Different conceptions of restructuring carry vastly different implications. What follows are some, clearly not all, of the differing forms of restructuring currently being promoted. Both the nature of the change being recommended and the theoretical basis for the proposals are discussed.

Restructuring Curriculum, Instruction, and Time

Currently, many are dissatisfied with the pedagogical techniques and content to which students are exposed. Analysts worry that the current emphasis on basic skills and isolated facts leave students "engaged" in activities as disconnected from each other as they are from students' concerns and experiences. As Ted Sizer (1984) writes,

> So I know that Franklin Roosevelt launched the New Deal; So what? These data may make good sense to the curriculum planner or to a teacher in a discipline, but they often appear inchoate to even the eager student and senseless to the docile student, save as grist for the examinations that ultimately provide credit toward a diploma (p. 93).

Fostering the use of teaching strategies that emphasize cooperation, engagement, interdisciplinary analysis, peer and cross-age tutoring, in-depth focus on specific projects, and higher order thinking skills will require both varied forms of staff development and increased flexibility regarding the length and nature of class periods.

Those hoping to restructure curriculum, instruction, and the way in which students spend time at school worry that presentation of a fragmented set of curricular goals and attempts by teachers to "cover" material often promotes student passivity and prevents meaningful learning experiences. These educators believe that students currently receive too few opportunities to explore subject matter in depth, to develop deep understandings, to apply facts and concepts, to work effectively in groups, and to develop what are often called "higher order thinking skills."

Advocates of restructuring argue that promoting more desirable processes for learning requires substantial changes in both method and structure. Fostering the use of teaching strategies that emphasize cooperation, engagement, interdisciplinary analysis, peer and cross-age tutoring, in-depth focus on specific projects, and higher order thinking skills will require both varied forms of staff development and increased flexibility regarding the length and nature of class periods. Teachers in restructured schools may work in teams, they may teach more than one discipline, and they may work with one group of students for more than 55 minutes per day. In short, restructuring will require changes in both pedagogy and organizational structures.

Restructuring Authority:
School-Based Decision Making and Teacher Professionalism

Frequently, restructuring is equated with plans to promote site-based decision making and/or teacher professionalism. Though the concepts are different, they are mentioned together in this framework because they are interrelated. School-based decision making carries with it different assumptions and goals than earlier proposals for decentralizing authority within school districts. Unlike earlier proposals that advocated decentralization on the grounds that bureaucrats poorly represented the goals and needs of many schools and students (especially those from certain racial and ethnic groups), current plans for school or site-based decision making stem largely from the belief that centralized decision making is inefficient. That is, that bureaucratic attempts to promote a set organizational and pedagogical program in all schools is unlikely to result in schooling practices which respond to the needs and desires of the diverse range of students currently present in many districts. The argument for localized authority holds that by granting teachers, site administrators, and parents more control and flexibility, and by holding them accountable for outcomes, more effective schools can be created.

Though particular forms of site-based decision making and teacher professionalism vary, certain principles are integral to the different efforts. Central to most plans is the belief that state, federal, and district personnel must assume new roles. The central office, the state, and the federal government will still set broad goals, ensure compliance with legal mandates, and monitor results. However, in restructured schools, their emphasis will shift from guiding and evaluating change to supporting and facilitating the actions of school based practitioners. Site administrators and particularly teachers will assume much greater responsibility for allocating funds, designing schedules, hiring personnel, designing curricula, and choosing textbooks. Rather than behaving as technicians who carry out orders from above in relative isolation, teachers who participate in site based decision making will plan and work collectively as professionals on matters of concern. Teachers will play a much greater role in determining school policy because they are the ones who must carry out the decisions and the ones most aware of their and their students strengths and needs. In the same regard, the role of principal will shift back to its historical role —that of principal teacher. Rather than behaving as administrators who solely coordinate, direct, and evaluate, principals will become instructional leaders involved in classroom activities.

Teachers will play a much greater role in determining school policy because they are the ones who must carry out the decisions and the ones most aware of their and their students strengths and needs.

Site-based decision making also aims to increase parent involvement. Proponents of restructuring hope that by offering meaningful ways for parents to participate in decision making, schools will come to better represent parent concerns and the needs of the community. In addition, these planners hope that this involvement will increase parents' commitment, concern, and understanding of their child's educational experience.

Restructuring the Provision of Services to Youth

Increasingly, policy makers are emphasizing the need to integrate children's services. These advocates argue that the current system is fragmented and fails to coordinate available services such as health, juvenile justice, family counseling, and welfare in a way which provides children consistent and dependable support. As Michael Kirst writes,

> All these public and private services are fragmented; they're episodic in that the children are picked up and dropped. The only accountability is referral from one system to another —the children are bounced around like a pinball in a pinball machine" (Kirst, 1991, p. 3).

Reformers hope that by offering children centralized and integrated services at school that children will receive more comprehensive support in a more efficient manner. The challenge of successfully integrating services is, however, considerable. As Kirst notes, agencies frequently fail to talk with each other, professional training is highly specialized, and confidentiality laws frequently inhibit the sharing of information. There are, of course, still questions to consider. Will integration of services actually result in a reduction of services? Will students who have "dropped-out" take advantage of coordinated services that are based in school buildings. Does it make more sense to try and integrate some services rather than others? These and other questions are only beginning to be addressed by policy makers, social service providers, and school practitioners.

Restructuring Public Financing: Schools of Choice

No aspect of the present agenda for school restructuring is more controversial or receives as much public attention as calls for schools of choice. Choice proposals have been advanced for many reasons and have taken different forms. John Chubb and Terry Moe argue, in a work that has received tremendous academic and popular attention, that "the specific kinds of democratic institutions by which American public education has been governed for the last half century appear to be incompatible with effective schooling" (1990, p. 2). The theoretical portion of their argument builds on both organizational theory and a literature known as "effective schools research." They use data from a national survey of secondary schools and argue that schools of choice are generally more effective than schools run through direct democratic control —structures that superintendents and school boards traditionally control, rather than parents and students.

The specific nature of choice plans vary considerably. Generally, choice proponents want to provide students (and their parents) with vouchers that can be used at independent as well as public schools. Choice advocates hope that schools will be forced to compete for students and that the resulting market forces will increase quality.

President Bush's plan *America 2000: An Education Strategy* supports choice. The plan states,

> [C]hoice gives [parents and voters] the leverage to act. Such choices should include all schools that serve the public and are accountable to public authority, regardless of who runs them. New incentives will be provided to states and localities to adopt comprehensive

> choice policies, and the largest federal school aid program (Chapter 1) will be revised to ensure that federal dollars follow the child to whatever extent state and local policies permit (1991, p. 12).

Proponents of choice face numerous critics. Many analysts worry about the impact of choice on the ability of schools to offer equality of opportunity. They worry, for example, that choice will enable private schools to fund their programs while only serving the most academically talented, the best behaved, or the richest students. Other, "less desirable" students, they fear, will be left without desirable options (see, for example, Moore and Davenport, 1989). In addition, some worry that students who lack knowledgeable or active advocates in the home will not have the information or motivation to promote their best interests. Others worry about the financial impact of choice programs and about transferring support from public programs to private schools and institutions. At a time when resources are already in short supply, they question the wisdom of asking the government to pay for the education of all the students who are currently enrolled in private schools (roughly 10 percent of the student population).

It is important that decision makers be aware of the pro's and con's of the numerous choice proposals and experiments which have been and are being carried out across the nation.

In addition to these constraints, many argue that "The evidence does not support the [Chubb and Moe] conclusion that current methods of school governance are responsible for poor student achievement" (Rosenberg, 1990, p. 64). Critics question their research methods, the way they interpret their data, and their policy implications. Some point out that Chubb and Moe do not control for the fact that parents currently choosing to pay for their children's education probably place more emphasis on education than otherwise similar parents who use the public schools. Others argue that the changes in achievement they attribute to choice are small even if their methodological approach is accepted. Glass and Matthews (1991) point out, for example, that even if one accepted Chubb and Moe's model, students attending a school which moved from the 5th percentile to the 95th percentile on their measure of autonomy would only be expected "to climb a month or so in grade equivalent units on a standardized achievement test" (1991, p. 26).

The debates on Choice will continue to rage and the stakes are clearly high. Policy makers interested in the potential for such reforms must attend to these discussions. In particular, it is important that decision makers be aware of the pro's and con's of the numerous choice proposals and experiments which have been and are being carried out across the nation.

Restructuring Student Assessment

Educators, politicians, and business leaders all appear convinced that we must improve our methods of assessing student performance. Currently, the argument goes, our means of assessment are grossly inadequate because they fail both to provide adequate measures of school performance and to clearly articulate a cohesive set of goals for students.

Proponents of restructuring assessment envision devices that can do more than monitor outcomes. They believe that the right assessment tools can help steer practitioners in productive directions. More specifically, these measures can help to articulate goals which are consistent with the needs of a highly technological, competitive, and democratic society. By examining the content of these exams, practitioners will gain guidance regarding skills and knowledge they must help students master.

Proponents of restructuring assessment envision devices that can do more than monitor outcomes.

Given these goals, these tests will need to measure more than mastery of isolated facts. They will need to be high quality measures of the new goals for curriculum and instruction discussed above. Increasingly, analysts are coming to believe that use of standardized tests to guide curriculum decreases the quality of instruction. As Lorrie Shepard explains, when teachers emphasize the goals of multiple-choice tests they frequently narrow their emphasis to only those topics that will be and can be tested by these measures. In addition, as schools are held more and more accountable and the importance of these tests increase, their format may distort both students and teachers' understanding of the purpose of learning. Shepard writes that as a result of standardized tests, [Children] learn, for example, that there is one right answer to every question, that the right answer resides in the head of the teacher or test maker, and that their job is to get that answer by guessing if necessary —hardly a perspective consistent with the goal of having children construct their own understandings (1991, p. 21).

In response to these concerns, states and districts are beginning to examine the potential of a new type of assessment known as authentic assessment which is also referred to as performance assessment.

> The tasks and problems used in authentic assessments are complex, integrated, and challenging instructional tasks. They require children to think and to be able to arrive at answers or explanations. Thus performance

assessments mirror good instruction . . . " (Shepard, 1991, p. 21).

It is important to note, however, that this new technology is still insufficiently developed to provide the kind of standardized comparisons that we have come to expect from standardized tests.

Whether new or traditional, there is hope that tests also will serve as a symbolic and substantive reminder for practitioners that improving the quality of schooling, and not simply changing its structure, is both the goal of these reforms and the measure of their value. Many fear that educators and politicians will become so caught up in one of the particular reforms mentioned above (i.e., interdisciplinary work, shared decision making) that they will come to view these projects as ends in their own right rather than as means for furthering development of student potential. Finally, by setting high standards and by making achievement of those standards a goal for all, policy makers interested in restructuring assessment hope that the dual concerns of equity and excellence can be pursued simultaneously.

These different types of restructuring make clear the possibility of better schools. Yet aspects of these various proposals are also both difficult to implement and controversial. Though the major components and rationale of restructuring proposals have been outlined above, a district leader, policy analyst, or school-based practitioner interested in restructuring still has much to consider.

The sections that follow aim to foster further reflection. In the next section we discuss the form some efforts to restructure have taken throughout the country. We then discuss some of the challenges, barriers, and possible trade-offs associated with the restructuring process.

Current Examples of Restructuring Efforts

There are numerous activities nationwide focusing on change at the school, district, community, state, and national levels that have been labeled "restructuring efforts." The examples below by no means represent all of the projects that fall under the umbrella of school restructuring. Rather, they provide a brief overview of the types of efforts reformers consider restructuring efforts. The reader will notice how the term restructuring is applied to a variety of different attempts to change schools in different settings. All the examples incorporate a restructuring of curriculum, instruction and time, as well as a restructuring of authority. The integration of services to children and changes in the role of parents remains part of the design of a minority of the efforts.

The term restructuring is applied to a variety of different attempts to change schools in different settings.

Examples of School and District Level Restructuring Efforts

Coalition of Essential Schools. Professor Theodore R. Sizer from Brown University designed the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) by drawing on the research he completed for his book Horace's Compromise (1984). In the last seven years more than 50 middle level and high schools have joined CES. This organization pushes schools to redefine teaching and learning with regard to the content being taught, the ways student assessment is accomplished by school faculty and staff, and the relationships at the school between and among educators, administrators, students, and parents. CES has also teamed recently with the Education Commission of the States in a restructuring project titled *Re:Learning*. This project aims to stimulate school change at the school, district, and state levels based on the nine CES principles noted below. The intent of *Re:Learning* is to coordinate school restructuring from "the school house to the state house" building commitment to the collaborative relationships necessary to accomplish change in this manner.

CES schools follow nine common principles: 1) Essential schools focus on helping students learn to use their minds well; 2) Goals are to be simple and clear; each student should master a limited number of skills and knowledge areas following the overriding philosophy that "less is more;" 3) Essential school goals apply to all students, with no distinctions such as gifted and talented, or remedial; 4) Teaching and learning are personalized with no teacher responsible for more than 80 students; 5) The student must be the "worker" and in some sense be responsible for the learning process rather than solely emphasizing the "teacher-as-deliverer -of-instructional-services." Coaching is a primary instructional technique in order to push students to learn how to learn; 6) Rather than using traditional tests and graduation requirements, student assessment and promotion depends on success-

ful mastery of subjects through an "exhibition" showing an understanding of certain skills and knowledge; 7) Essential schools stress "unanxious" expectations, trust, and decency; 8) The principal and teachers serve as generalists and specialists, and take on multiple roles as teacher/counselor/manager; and 9) Essential schools strive to have loads of 80 students per teacher, time for collective planning among teachers, competitive salaries, and per pupil costs no more than 10 percent higher than those at traditional schools (Sizer, 1989, pp. 2-4).

Miami Dade County Schools. The schools in Miami Dade County focused their restructuring efforts on school governance through site-based and shared decision making with the belief that practitioner empowerment and school site involvement is essential to effective school change. Schools participating in the shared decision making pilot program receive their school budget and decide internally how to disperse it. Schools in the pilot program also receive special staff development funds for needs specific to their sites. In addition to the school based management pilot, Dade County schools are involved in other change projects including Saturday classes, mini-sabbatical programs of seminars and clinics for teachers, and tuition stipends for teachers pursuing advanced degrees who transfer to schools where they would be a racial minority (for more detail about Dade County's efforts as well as other districts, see Elmore, 1990).

San Diego City Schools. In 1987, the Schools of the Future Commission of the San Diego City Schools issued five recommendations for restructuring the schools in that city. These recommendations included the following charges: 1) create a new schools-community coalition, 2) begin a fundamental restructuring of schools, 3), integrate technology into future schools, 4) expand second language and world studies curricula, and 5) secure a long term funding base for schools (San Diego City Schools, 1987). In the ensuing four years the district has focused its efforts on school based management, new instruction and assessment techniques, and developing schools with coordinated social service delivery among other endeavors. Two examples of restructuring efforts in San Diego include: 1) the O'Farrell Community School and 2) the New Beginnings Project.

1. The O'Farrell Community School: Center for Advanced Academic Studies opened as a middle level restructured school in September 1990. The intent of this school is to provide the same high level academic curriculum to all students at all levels in an environment that is supportive and nurturing. Teachers and administrators met for over a year to plan the school's three components: its curriculum, the social/emotional support

aspect of the program, and the school's governance structure. O'Farrell students are members of educational "families" that stress personal attention. The curriculum is interdisciplinary and there is common planning time for teachers within each family. The school is governed by a community council and decisions are the responsibility of all staff. In addition, O'Farrell staff is working with local social service agencies to provide services on campus. (For a further description of the O'Farrell project, see Goren and Bachofer 1990).

2. New Beginnings. The New Beginnings project is a collaborative effort between the San Diego City Schools, the City and County of San Diego, and the San Diego Community College District to coordinate their services, especially since they share the same clientele. The project just completed a feasibility study at one San Diego elementary school to examine the need for coordinated social services and to determine an approach to integrated service delivery. New Beginnings involves the school as the primary source for the identification of concerns and referrals. A "center" is located at or near the school where assessment and case management can occur. An essential part of the New Beginnings concept is the "extended team" of social service providers and school personnel who work together to provide support services to children and their families. This effort will continue at the same site with regular plans for evaluation to determine how the project can be replicated elsewhere (For a further description of this project, see Rodriguez, et al., 1991).

Parent and Community Restructuring Efforts. Restructuring programs are also focused on improving and increasing parent and community involvement in schools and schooling. There are several examples of programs nationwide focusing on these issues. James Comer from Yale University has established schools in districts across the country that focus on early childhood development and approaches that teachers, administrators, parents, and social service providers can take, especially in inner city areas, to meet the diverse needs of children in these schools (Comer, 1988; Comer, 1980). Henry Levin from Stanford University has established the Accelerated Schools program where all children share a highly enriched school curriculum. An essential and required component of Accelerated Schools is parental involvement in all aspects of the school's operation (Levin, 1988). Finally, the Chicago Public Schools most recently decentralized into neighborhood districts, governed by parent-teacher

councils that have direct control over school budgets, hiring and firing of school personnel, and curricula (Moore, 1989).

Examples of State Level Restructuring Efforts

Although a number of states have provided funding for restructuring efforts, the policies which guide many of the activities remain vague and undifferentiated from school improvement activities. Jane David, et. al. (1990) prepared a report for the National Governors' Association highlighting efforts from different states across the nation to restructure their schools. The following examples taken from the NGA report describe the more visible efforts.

Although a number of states have provided funding for restructuring efforts, the policies which guide many of the activities remain vague and undifferentiated from school improvement activities.

Washington. The state of Washington has sponsored the Schools for the 21st Century project since the legislature passed it in 1987. Schools have ten additional days beyond their 180 of instruction to develop programs to improve learning. In addition the legislation provides for technical assistance and staff development, and permits districts and schools to apply for waivers from state regulations governing the schools. This program provides schools and districts extra resources and time to plan and implement restructuring activities over a six year time period.

North Carolina. North Carolina implemented a Lead Teacher program in 1988 where one teacher out of every 12 works with faculty at their school on staff development and technical assistance activities. The North Carolina legislature supports the Lead Teacher program financially, yet it is coordinated by a consortium of business, education, and political leaders called The Public School Forum of North Carolina. The Lead Teacher's responsibilities at each participating school site is determined by the faculty at that site rather than by legislative mandate or officials in the state department of education. In its first year of operation, six pilot schools tried the Lead Teacher concept with teachers involved in clinical supervision and curriculum review among other activities.

Maine. The state of Maine is sponsoring a Restructuring Schools Project initiated in 1987. Participating schools are eligible for planning grants and can apply for waivers from state regulations in order to enact their restructuring plans. Nineteen sites are participating in the process which includes a year-long planning process and required support for the change from three fourths of the faculty as well as the local superintendent and board of education. Schools have implemented middle school curricula and multi-disciplinary courses through the Restructuring School Project. A steering committee of

state officials, university representatives, and teacher association representatives oversee the restructuring efforts in this state. Maine's Restructuring School Project is funded through existing resources set aside by the Maine Department of Educational and Cultural Services.

California. The state legislature passed legislation in 1990 to establish a demonstration of restructuring in public education geared towards improving student learning. The legislation, SB1274 (chapter 1556, Statutes of 1990) encourages educators in schools and districts to devise new ways to improve student learning. The legislation also is intended to "empower" educators to develop new approaches and techniques, holding them accountable for actual results.

The demonstration program under SB1274 involves two stages. The first is a planning stage to develop a restructuring proposal. This is followed by the implementation of the demonstration project. A school district or a consortium of districts could apply for grants under the SB1274 legislation. SB1274 had $6.3 million available for planning grants during the 1990-91 school year, with a maximum of $30 per pupil for the planning grant and $200 per pupil for the actual demonstration projects. From the 1,499 submitted proposals,220 schools received funding to plan a systemic restructuring of their teaching/learning process.

The legislation emphasizes four essential elements to be included in the restructuring plans. These elements include: 1) curriculum, instruction, and assessment, 2) changes in the roles of school site personnel and parents, 3) the use of technology in the schools, and 4) projects proposing opportunities for 11th and 12th graders to attend classes in other settings such as universities or special training programs and/or to participate in internship programs. The legislation encourages flexibility in the development of these projects and places a special emphasis on typically low performing schools.

Constraints on Efforts to Restructure

The rationale for restructuring seems solid and the efforts described above are promising. Still, the history of education in America is filled with examples of promising programs. The challenge is to make these exceptions the rule. This White Paper has discussed both the theory supporting restructuring and some attempts to restructure schools. How much optimism is warranted? Despite frequent calls throughout this century for change, historians remind us that in many respects schools haven't changed (Cuban, 1984). If nothing else, the persistent shortcoming of major reform efforts should lead policymakers to think critically about these proposals. It makes sense to try and spot some of the potential problems and difficulties that may be encountered by both practitioners and policy makers. First, the political barriers related to the interests of different actors will be discussed. Then organizational barriers to producing change are outlined. Finally, several of the technical and fiscal constraints on plans for restructuring are discussed.

Political Barriers

Will educators at all levels be willing to assume new roles and responsibilities? Educators are finding it hard to stay focused on students' needs, rather than on the political ramifications of changing the decision making structures within schools and school districts (Olson, p. 1988).

The proposed changes will require teachers, site-based administrators, and individuals in state and district offices to assume significantly different roles and responsibilities. There are reasons to believe that such changes may be difficult to realize.

Numerous analysts commenting on restructuring have emphasized the way in which the proposed changes will require teachers, site-based administrators, and individuals in state and district offices to assume significantly different roles and responsibilities. There are reasons to believe that such changes may be difficult to realize.

Clearly, restructuring aims to alter significantly the roles of teachers and principals as well as state and district personnel. The willingness of this range of actors to go along with these changes is far less clear. Analysts worry that actors representing these different groups will focus more on fighting for what they take to be their best interests than on promoting policies to meet students' needs. A number of forces combine to constrain the desire of many to assume these new roles and the rules and responsibilities that come with them. First, some of these shifts are perceived as threats that might adversely alter the status, power, and requirements associated with different jobs. For example, some teachers might be hesitant to assume responsibility for additional administrative and policy decisions without receiving any lightening of their teaching responsibilities or additional compensation. Similarly, district and site-based administrators might be hesitant

to give up their control over some decisions, believing that their experience, training, and access to information make them uniquely qualified for certain kinds of decisions. Those interested in promoting restructuring need to consider carefully the ways in which their plans effect different groups and what steps can be taken to foster these actors' support for such major changes.

Bringing restructured schools to life will require that educational leaders be attentive to the potential conflict between both centralized assessment and regulation, on the one hand, and school-based flexibility on the other.

The actions of political leaders, many of whom are currently taking a more direct interest in educational reform, may raise other more easily identifiable political barriers to restructuring. Efforts to restructure schools, though attractive to and supported by many political figures, may conflict with politicians' desire to both monitor and influence educational practice. Many analysts, for example, believe that the national goals proposed by the nation's Governors may lead to a national test and curriculum. Though such changes may offer many politicians a chance to demonstrate their concern for education, it is possible that these tests may also constrain the ability of those in the schools to develop policies and practices adapted to the needs and desires of the students with whom they work. More generally, analysts worry that as states and the Federal government take a more active interest in education that more, rather than less, bureaucratic regulations will follow taking the form of programmatic and curricular requirements and monitoring mechanisms. Such actions may constrain local attempts to provide practitioners the time and flexibility necessary for developing policies and practices that are most appropriate for their contexts.

This is not to say that political leadership even in the form of a national curriculum or test, will necessarily prevent the flexibility and empowerment that proponents of restructuring believe will foster better schools. As Smith and O'Day (1991) argue

> If states can overcome the fragmentation in the system by providing coordination of long range instructional goals, materials development, professional training, and assessment, they can set the conditions under which teacher empowerment and professionalization, school site management, and even parental choice can be both effective and broad-based (p. 29).

Bringing such a vision to life will not be easy and will require that educational leaders be attentive to the potential conflict between both centralized assessment and regulation, on the one hand, and school-based flexibility on the other. Harnessing the concern and commitment of political leaders and finding ways to assess and guide

performance without constraining local actors will be a major challenge for those who hope to restructure American schools.

Organizational Barriers

Both practitioners and researchers have ample evidence that long ingrained patterns of behavior are difficult to change. Much of this intransigence can be explained by the features of educational organizations. Given the interdependent nature of much that goes on in schools, truly restructuring schools will be an enormous task. As Jane David (1990) writes:

> Imagine a circular jigsaw puzzle with students and teachers in the center, surrounded by rings of interlocking pieces representing the demands of local, state, and federal agencies . . . Trying to change one piece of an interlocking set of pieces is not possible unless the other pieces are flexible enough to yield when the shape of a neighboring piece is changed (p. 210).

Successful proposals for restructuring must carefully attend to these relationships and the impact of changes in one part of the system on actors in other parts of the educational system.

One of the major weaknesses of early attempts at restructuring has been a failure to appreciate and accommodate the complexity of these interdependencies. Clearly, successful proposals for restructuring must carefully attend to these relationships and the impact of changes in one part of the system on actors in other parts of the educational system.

A cautious, "go slow" stance may not, however, be the answer. Given these interdependent relationships, some proponents of restructuring worry that changing only one or two aspects of the system may not lead to the desired results. For example, it is questionable what changes in decision making procedures can accomplish if not accompanied by shifts in curriculum and instruction. Early attempts to restructure have often been pushed by those who have equated school-based management with restructuring. These efforts have failed, for example, to foster changes in curriculum and instruction, to make strong connections to social and health service agencies, or to incorporate the district office in the process of change.

The challenge then is considerable. Those hoping to promote restructuring are caught in a bind. They will need to assess the potential limits of incremental attempts at restructuring against the possible costs of trying to move financially strapped and organizationally complex districts in too many directions at once.

A second organizational barrier stems from an inappropriate assumption that is common in much of the rhetoric that surrounds restructuring. Much of the talk about restructuring emphasizes the need for schools to better respond to the "needs of students." As mentioned above, many also worry that attempts to restructure may be stymied if actors attend to their interests as teachers, principals, or district administrators instead of those of students. However, it is not necessarily clear that even if actors in these different positions acted exclusively out of their concern for students that they would all support the same goals or that they would recommend the same means of achieving those goals. Actors in different positions within the organization are influenced by their varied perspectives and by their need to respond to different constituents. A superintendent or political leader, for example, may be much more interested in the opinions of business leaders and school board members than a teacher. Similarly, teachers might be less moved by evidence relating to test scores and more attentive to more subjective measures of educational effectiveness. In short, different actors have different agendas. At times, these varied priorities may become a barrier to enthusiasm for change.

Those preparing to restructure schools need to think carefully to find ways actors with differing roles and responsibilities can work effectively together.

Similarly, many are currently arguing that part of the package for restructuring should include promotion of integrated youth services within the schools (Kirst, 1991). The analysis presented above makes it seem likely that one barrier to this integration will stem from the fact that probation officers, case workers, and health care professionals can be expected to have differing priorities. A recent study examining an early attempt to implement an integrated services program found that "differences in philosophy make cooperation (between agencies) difficult" and that, "In order for a cohesive system to exist, participating agencies must have a shared, integrated philosophy . . . " (Rodriguez et al., p. vi, 1990). Thus, those preparing to restructure schools need to think carefully to find ways actors with differing roles and responsibilities can work effectively together.

Numerous considerations lead educators to reject large and risky changes. First, there is widespread acceptance of the structures that currently characterize modern schools —the status quo. Few people wonder about the appropriate length of an individual class. Forty to fifty-five minute class periods are widely accepted as appropriate. Similarly, though proposals for interdisciplinary studies strike many as intriguing, few question the desirability of having special classes devoted to English, social studies, math, or science. In addition, the public rarely worries when schools separate students according to their age, award students grades, or give students a diploma at the end of twelfth grade. As long as educators adhere to these norms it is

easier for educators to hold students responsible for their performance and to insulate themselves from criticism. Educators who stray from these norms, however, leave themselves vulnerable to criticism if their programs don't produce desirable results or if their schools appear disorderly. "Why," many parents might ask, "did you choose to experiment on my child?"

Particularly problematic is the fact that it may take five to seven years for the successes or failures of restructuring to be identified (see Kirst, 1991). Yet policy makers and politicians who are staking great hope in these efforts may not be able to wait that long for results. Given the powerful impact of schools on children and Americans' desires for quick results, the risks of reforms such as restructuring may seem large to many educational leaders. In order to build enthusiasm for a change of this magnitude, leaders of restructuring efforts need to make the necessity of change clear. They must argue that the greatest risks lie in acceptance of the status quo and they must convince both the public and those who will be asked to change that current methods are failing. Proponents of restructuring will also need to refrain from claims that will quickly prove false: that mistakes in restructuring can be avoided or that the pay-off will be quick.

Leaders of restructuring efforts need to make the necessity of change clear. They must argue that the greatest risks lie in acceptance of the status quo and they must convince both the public and those who will be asked to change that current methods are failing.

Technical and Financial Barriers

Both reports from the field and analysis by policy experts attest to a third type of constraint on restructuring efforts. In some important respects educators lack the technical and financial support necessary to implement these plans.

The kinds of shifts in roles and responsibilities discussed above will demand a substantial commitment. Attempts to bring about changes on numerous levels in school systems that are already short of resources and time will be difficult. Preparing individuals to fulfill these new roles effectively will take a significant amount of time for training and reflection. Administrators will probably need help making a transition from directors to facilitators and technical assistants. They must consider, for example, which decisions and responsibilities they must or should still control and which decisions teachers and/or parents are better suited to address.

Similarly, teachers and others who will be asked to participate in the decision making process will need time to consider possible directions, to consider possible ways of achieving these goals, and, where appropriate, to develop new capacities. Teachers are frequently isolated and lack both time to plan and access to information regarding the kinds of

alternatives that exist. Many have described schools in which little changed even though teachers were given substantial control. As David Cohen writes,

> Most reform proposals . . . read as though the authors believed that the chief task was to devise new exams, to write new curricula, or to create new governance or organizational structures. Few reformers seem to see that such changes are unlikely to work unless educators develop many new capacities, that would enable them to take advantage of changes in guidance, governance, and organization Cohen, 1990, p. 29).

Other responsibilities facing teachers need to be lessened when teachers assume major new decision making roles since the vast majority of teachers and administrators are already pressed for time. It would surely be a shame if the additional responsibilities associated with cooperative forms of decision making resulted in improved school planning at the expense of time spent planning for lessons or commenting on students' work.

Bringing about meaningful change through restructuring surely requires that promoters think about ways of supporting the efforts of individuals who must bring about change in the schools.

Furthermore, as discussed earlier, educators hope that restructuring will lead to significant changes in curriculum and instruction. It is one thing, however, to propose that all students be presented with challenging and engaging material that enables them to fulfil their potential —it is quite another to achieve this goal. Our failures do not stem solely from poorly identified goals or from a lack of will. Learning how to employ new pedagogical strategies to make students more active learners capable of complex thinking requires time for reflection and training. Bringing about meaningful change through restructuring surely requires that promoters think about ways of supporting the efforts of individuals who must bring about change in the schools.

That we currently lack the technology to assess systematically many of the new curricular goals (for example, higher order thinking skills) is cause for concern. Many who support empowerment do so only as long as those who are empowered are held accountable for the results. If standard multiple choice tests are used to promote accountability, we may end up rewarding only those who teach the kind of isolated factual knowledge that reformers feel is inadequate. Those interested in restructuring, therefore, need to pay close attention to assessment. If restructuring leads teachers to teach students in new ways and tests continue to measure the acquisition of particular facts, these tests may make successfully restructured schools look bad.

Conclusion

A vast array of efforts to reform schooling practices focus on restructuring. This White Paper discusses the nature of these varied undertakings, the complexity of the barriers associated with these goals, and the possible benefits of varied reforms. Several issues emerge. First, restructuring efforts are setting the agenda of school reform in the 1990s. Second, historical precedent and a tight fiscal environment make it seem likely that, in many cases, change will be slow and incremental. At the same time, there is a national consensus regarding the need for fundamentally changing America's public school system. As we discussed above, numerous states, districts, schools, and now the federal government are embarking on ambitious efforts to significantly alter schooling practices.

Decisions regarding the extent and nature of change pursued should be made after considering the goals of particular schools and districts, their available resources, and their political and organizational context.

There are barriers: political, fiscal, and especially organizational. However, given widespread appreciation that our schools are failing to deliver all that we need, it makes sense to argue, as San Diego's superintendent has, "that more of the same will not be good enough." Educational leaders must build on the energy surrounding efforts to restructure, while considering the specific goals, resources, organizational features, and needs of particular settings. The decision to pursue various aspects of the restructuring agenda are complex and dependent on many contextual factors. The challenges associated with change are numerous —and many systems are already struggling. While universal calls for restructuring may be politically advantageous, educators in certain districts might proceed with caution. This is not to say that restructuring does not make sense for many, but decisions regarding the extent and nature of change pursued should be made after considering the goals of particular schools and districts, their available resources, and their political and organizational context.

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